

THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH.

Movement to Reorganize the Society in all the dioceses of the country.

A movement is now on foot throughout the country to reorganize in every parish the pre-eminently Catholic Society for the Propagation of the Faith. Very Rev. A. Magnien is the general director and Rev. H. Granjon, assistant director and secretary of the association, with headquarters at St. Mary's Seminary, Baltimore, Md.

The work dearest to the heart of the Son of God is the salvation of souls, which is brought about by the spread of the Gospel. In the beginning the Apostles went as far into the "whole world" for this purpose as the shortness of their lives and the difficulties of travel allowed, and their followers went on and kept up preaching and teaching till the kingdom of Christ was soon more widespread than the mighty Roman Empire had ever been. Then came political and social wrecks and changes for a thousand years, so that little progress was made in extending the boundaries of the faith; the Church struggled with the inflowing tide of barbarians, and with great trouble held her own. When the tempest went down her missionaries again set out to bring other peoples to the service of Christ, and we find them going into Prussia, Norway, Sweden, penetrating the heart of Africa, advancing overland to China, daring with Columbus the unknown Atlantic and with De Gama the cape of storms, exploring the forests and deserts of North and South America and the islands of Japan in search of God's missing children. The unhappy Protestant revolt, while it deprived the Church of one arm in tearing the North from her body, only added to the zeal with which she used the other arm for her work, and by nature of the still faithful nations invaded lands that no European conqueror had ever visited,

to teach them the truths of salvation.

While other countries have full credit for their glorious labors in this field, France seems especially to have been chosen by God for this later apostolate. Our own land in particular is baptized in the sweat and blood and consecrated by the admirable lives and deaths of French priests and nuns. Our earliest frontier priests and bishops have been mostly Frenchmen, hence so many of our Western towns, lakes and rivers have Gallic and holy names. There is but one word which may express one's admiration for the deeds of French missionaries in our country, and that is the exclamation of Louis XV. when he saw the Irish Brigade charge at Fontenoy. "Magnificent!" he said.

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Frenchmen at home seconded with their money the personal sacrifices of their countrymen abroad, and in 1820, under the guidance of Bishop Forbin Janson, who had visited the United States, certain laymen of Lyons founded the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. The aid it gave, and still gives our Church, is very considerable, and indeed we could not have got along as well without it. Just think! Since 1822 the central committee has sent us no less than five million four hundred thousand dollars. I think there is not a single diocese of ours but is indebted to this noble organization, and though most of our bishops no longer need their alms, yet a few of them are still helped in this way.

And what have we ourselves done for the work of this splendid society? Very little, I must say. While the inhabitant of France has for a long time back contributed an average of three cents a year to the Propagation of Faith, the